

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 74 | Number 1 (Winter 2015)

pps. 91-93

The Nature of Childhood: An Environmental History of Growing Up in America since 1865

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ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Petrik, Paula. "The Nature of Childhood: An Environmental History of Growing Up in America since 1865." *The Annals of Iowa* 74 (2015), 91-93.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.12181>

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that included other pre-eminent figures such as Walter Lippmann, who wrote in favor of a science-based journalism and against the adaptation of wartime propaganda techniques for private (and, worse, *public*) purposes, and Edward Bernays, who is widely regarded as the “father of public relations.”

Within this broader theme, Cecil’s scholarship offers satisfying moments of completion. Whereas other accounts of public relations are often satisfied with the notion that Bernays actually *was* the founder of modern public relations, rather than its (and his own) greatest promoter, Cecil refers to recent research by Karen Miller Russell and Carl O. Bishop charting the origins of the field back to Ivy Lee’s career in press agency in the second half of the nineteenth century. Perhaps this is a small detail, but it explains why Hoover’s public relations effort was able to leap into action at a professional level from the start.

In the present day, when Edward Snowden’s journalistic salvo has exposed the National Security Agency for peering over every digital shoulder, *Hoover’s FBI* offers key insights into the origins of the still contentious boundaries between the members of the Fourth Estate and the modern police state that Hoover began to build 90 years ago.

For Matthew Cecil’s account of the *Des Moines Register’s* role in this story, see his article, “‘Whoa, Edgar’: The *Des Moines Register* and *Tribune*, Cowles Publications, and J. Edgar Hoover’s FBI,” in the *Annals of Iowa* 71 (Spring 2012), 111–36. — *Editor*

The Nature of Childhood: An Environmental History of Growing Up in America since 1865, by Pamela Riney-Kehrberg. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014. xiv, 283 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Paula Petrik is professor of history at George Mason University. She is the coeditor of *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850–1950* (1992).

Like many who live in the suburbs of a large metro area, I live in what the developer calls a “starter home,” a house with a detached garage and alley. It is the developer’s idea of a 1950s dwelling embodying all the decade’s myths and stereotypes. Located across the street from an elementary school and a block from a public swimming pool, our house sits in the middle of a young neighborhood. In fact, at one point 28 children under 10 years old lived on our block. One might guess that children would be everywhere—riding their bikes and scooters, drawing

chalk figures in the alley, walking to and from school, stealing apples, and so forth. In fact, I rarely see any children at all. When I do see children, an adult is not far away. Where have all the children gone? What has happened to children on their own playing outside? These questions (or ones like them) underpin Pamela Riney-Kehrberg's exploration of the transformation of "outdoor children" into "indoor children."

She begins by exploring children's lives on the Great Plains and the parkland of the Midwest in the nineteenth century. Because most of the nation's population lived on farms, children grew up with nature, so there was no need to provide a "nature experience" for them. As the country urbanized, children still found the outdoors beguiling and converted the city's landscape into their playing fields, ignoring playgrounds designed and supervised by adults. After the turn of the century, parents increasingly began to worry about their offspring's estrangement from the natural world. As a result, adults founded summer camps, created organizations (Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, to name two) and implemented nature education curricula and school field trips to furnish children with a "nature experience." At mid-century, Riney-Kehrberg contends, there was a real tension between children's preference for indoor activities (TV and board games) and parents' efforts to get them outside. Still, there were children, as the author argues from her own history, who found interesting ways to use the built environment, including irrigation canals and empty lots. Despite adults' best efforts, however, "the day of the free-roaming child, exploring urban, suburban or wild space seemed to be over" (9). Children found shopping malls and television more enticing than landscape and wildlife. More important, parents became more fearful of the dangers harbored by the world outside. Children, in short, were no longer safe outdoors.

Although children's voices are difficult to find in the historical record, Riney-Kehrberg does a masterful job of ferreting out children's perspectives from manuscript sources, newspapers, periodicals, films, and published reminiscences. She is at her best when she is letting her subjects tell their stories. Her narrative revels in children's tales of bouncing off a bloated horse carcass, swimming in sewage, racing up and down elevators, or overcoming biking disasters in the northern woods. There are, however, fewer references to children's indoor activities or preferences. What television programs did they prefer? *Howdy Dowdy*? *Lone Ranger*? Did their penchant for malls have anything to do with tweens' boy/girl relationships? The author might have explored more fully what enticements lured children indoors and why those attractions were so appealing. She is also less convincing when she concentrates on adult paranoia regarding children. One of the themes in the United States in

the post-World War II era was fear: fear of the atom bomb, fear of Communism, fear of radiation, fear of irradiated milk, fear of fluoride, fear *ad infinitum*. Although Riney-Kehrberg does suggest that the public emphasis on missing children ratcheted up parental fears, she might have investigated how parental fear for their children's safety outside fit into society's general anxiety. Despite these criticisms, *The Nature of Childhood* is a solid addition to the history of childhood; it offers a provocative argument and raises interesting questions that invite historians' further consideration.

So Far, So Good, by Ralph Salisbury. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013. 274 pp. \$19.95 paperback.

Reviewer Thomas K. Dean is senior presidential writer/editor at the University of Iowa. His extensive writings about the importance of place include *Under a Midland Sky* (2008).

Ralph Salisbury, noted poet and fiction writer, presents here a life-spanning memoir from his Great Depression boyhood growing up on an Iowa farm to his recent days in retirement from teaching at the University of Oregon. Born of a half-Cherokee father and an Irish American mother, Salisbury's work often emphasizes his Native American background. Self-identity in a world of prejudice plays a major role in the book, but, as in much of his writing, Salisbury emphasizes the "tribe of the world." As he states, "I am a Cherokee-Shawnee-English-Irish person, not part this part that but all everything, whatever it is" (242).

Salisbury's memoir, which won the River Teeth Literary Nonfiction Prize, is chronological in only a general sense. The broad strokes of the book's organization move from his birth to the present, but the writing is often associative. Stories and memories spin out from each other and spiral back, creating more of an impressionistic exploration of his experience and identity as opposed to a linear chronicle. Generally, scholars of Iowa history and culture will be most interested in approximately the first half of the book until Salisbury joins the service (underage) at age 17, as well as a later portion dealing with a brief teaching stint at Drake University in Des Moines. Even so, the entire book should be read to capture all Iowa references as well as to understand Iowa influences on the author's later life.

The book is not a farm chronicle per se, but Iowa historians will most likely find interest in specific descriptions of changes in farm life and technology from the early to the mid-twentieth century, especially from the perspective of a poor farming family. Even more compelling, though, is Salisbury's perspective on the role of violence in his life and,